THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) A Pakistani delegation under the aegis of the Pakistan Tea Association visited India in September 2003 and held discussions mainly with the tea trade members in South India.

(b) Exporters of tea from India to Pakistan would be eligible for all benefits and financial assistance under the various schemes of the Tea Board to promote exports to Indian tea.

(c) The Pakistan tea trade delegation, which visited India, has not sought any concessions from the Government of India.

(d) and (e) During 2003-04 (April-October), India has exported 3.25 million kgs of tea of Pakistan as against 1.98 million kgs exported during the corresponding period in 2002-03. However, there has been greater interaction between the tea industry of India and Pakistan and the Indian Tea Association has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Pakistan Tea Association providing for import of 10 million kgs of tea by Pakistan from India, during July 2003 to June 2004.

(f) Government is not aware of any reaction from the Government of Pakistan with respect to the recent interaction between the tea industry of both countries.

Trade relations with China

1238. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA :
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether trade agreement with China signed during the Prime Minister's visit have improved the trade relations with China;

(b) if so, whether India and China have decided to establish joint study group on economic cooperation;

(c) whether the Confederation of Indian Industry has entered into a fresh Memorandum of Understanding with the All India-China Federation of Industry and Commerce in October, 2003;

(d) if so, whether his Ministry has sought Cabinet approval for offer list forwarded by China and exchange of tariff concessions with that country under Bangkok Agreement; and

(e) if so, to what extent Government have approved and conveyed to Chinese Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Confederation of Indian Industry has entered into a fresh Memorandum of Understanding with the All India-China Federation of Industry and Commerce in November 2003.

(d) and (e) Negotiations for exchange of tariff concessions with China on China's accession to Bangkok Agreement were concluded in the bilateral meeting held with China in Beijing in February, 2003. As agreed between the two sides, India will extend concessions on 106 items corresponding to 188 tariff lines (6 digit HS), on which tariff concessions are already given to other Bangkok Agreement member countries, i.e. Bangladesh, Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka. China has agreed to extend tariff concessions on 217 tariff lines as per International Trade Classification Harmonised System (ITC HS) 2003.

Export of wheat to Iraq

1239. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
DR. A.R. KIDWAI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian business delegation that went to Iraq was successful in reviving contracts worth Rs. 300 crores for export of three lakh tonnes of wheat to Iraq under the United Nation's oil-for-food programme;

(b) if so, whether Government in Iraq has approved to revive export of wheat contracts for which agreements were already signed but shipments could not go through due to war;